



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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Office of the Provost

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David W. McLaughlin *Provost*

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Memorandum from: David W. McLaughlin *DWM*
To: Deans and Directors
Vice Provosts
Subject: Protocol and Procedures for Assigning Course Credits

In conjunction with our ongoing Middle States accreditation process and our continued compliance with accreditation standards, and as part of our commitment to providing the best educational experience possible for our students, I am asking the schools, including the portal campuses and the global sites, to clarify procedures and maintain appropriate records with respect to reviewing courses to determine the student work load and assign an appropriate number of credit hours per course.

To follow up on the November 6 discussion in the Deans with Provost meeting, all schools are asked to have school procedures and protocols posted on their websites; some schools have already done so. Schools are asked to work closely with Vice Provost Cybele Raver and Assistant Provost Russ Hamberger to ensure that their efforts and processes are described fully and appropriately posted. Please submit the web site addresses to Cybele and Russ for their records.

School Procedures and Protocols: Each school is expected to set up procedures and protocols for assigning credit hours. School procedures and protocols should align with current practice. In addition, schools shall follow these minimum guidelines:

- Each school shall maintain procedures, written and web-accessible, pertaining to the assignment of credit hours for all courses offered, regardless of the format or modality of instruction. This includes but is not limited to traditional lectures, individual voice or music instruction, on-line courses and so on.
- Schools shall document that procedures provide for the assignment of credit hours for each course based on the following criteria:
 - Stated objectives for student learning, including (but not limited to) acquisition of content knowledge, key competencies (such as skill in oral or written communication), or analytic reasoning skills;

- Hours of instruction proposed for the course;
 - Hours of supplementary assignments and student effort that are anticipated to take place outside the classroom. Hours of anticipated student effort outside the classroom can include estimated time spent on reading, writing, laboratory or studio assignments, preparation for examinations, etc.
- Beginning with spring 2014, each School shall maintain an annual record of reviews of proposed new courses. Records should include the outcome of the reviews, i.e., the proportion of courses approved vs. returned for revision and resubmission. Records should also include the mean and range of credits assigned to new courses.
 - Schools shall also maintain records of all actions recommended and taken to maintain high standards for instruction and student learning at the course level, consistent with school policy. This may include minutes from school committees charged with support for instruction at the graduate and undergraduate levels, resolutions passed through faculty meetings on guidelines and policies for monitoring the quality and range of course offerings, and the like.

Background and Rationale: Time-based units of instructional credit for courses taught were first introduced into higher education to determine faculty workloads and assess faculty eligibility for newly established pension programs. In some quarters, these have become an important measure of student attainment of knowledge. At NYU, our position, reflected in our [academic assessment programs](#) is to directly assess competencies and analytic skills gained (via grades, exams, and the like). However, course credits have obvious importance for students' progress toward the degree, especially for students who transfer between institutions and want to ensure that credits taken are accepted by their new academic homes. And, maintaining clear policy and records about credit assignments has great importance to NYU and many of its lower income students, since the institution's demonstration of a valid process of determining credit hours is required by the U.S. Department of Education as part of its review for assessing student eligibility for financial aid. Information regarding our institution's adherence to credit hour definitions and policies is needed not only at the federal level, but also at the regional and state levels, by such accrediting organizations as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and the New York State Department of Education. Information on school credit hour review is also part of NYU's internal review and approval of programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels, including review by the Graduate Commission, the Undergraduate Curriculum Advisory Committee, and the Office of Academic Program Review.

Cc: School Administrators